

FACULTY & *friends*

**Aaron Au, violin and viola
Elisabeth McHan, violin
Tanya Prochazka, cello
Roger Admiral, piano**

Friday, October 15, 2004 at 8:00 pm



**Arts Building
University of Alberta**

Program

Three Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 14e (1996)

I. Öd und traurig

II. Vivo

III. Aus der Ferne

György Kurtág

(b. 1926)

Aaron Au, violin

Roger Admiral, piano

Four Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 7 (1910)

Anton von Webern

(1883-1945)

I. Sehr langsam

II. Rasch

III. Sehr langsam

IV. Bewegt

Aaron Au, violin

Roger Admiral, piano

Op. 8 for Piano (1963-1968)

György Kurtág

II. (5, 7, and 9)

III. (1)

Roger Admiral, piano

Lieder ohne Worte (1985-1994) for Violin and Piano

Heinz Holliger

(b. 1939)

I. Frühlingslied

III. (... fern ...)

V. (... sam)

VI. (Flammen ... Schnee)

VII. Berceuse matinale

Aaron Au, violin

Roger Admiral, piano

Intermission

Signs, Games and Messages (1989 - in progress)

György Kurtág

Eine Blume für Denes Zsigmondy for Viola

Perpetual Motion (a)

In memoriam Tamas Blum for Viola

Aaron Au, viola

Variations for piano, Op. 27 (1937)

Anton von Webern

- I. Sehr masig
- II. Sehr schnell
- III. Ruhig fliesend

Roger Admiral, piano

Játékok (1973 - in progress)

György Kurtág

- Dirge
- Antiphony in F-Sharp
- Hommage a Christian Wolff (Half-asleep)
- Andras Hajdu is 60
- Hommage a Pierre Boulez

Piano Pieces, Op. 3 (1965)

György Kurtág

- I. Inesorabile
- III. Sostenuto
- VI. Grave
- VII. Adagio

Splinters, Op. 6d (1979)

György Kurtág

- I. Molto agitato
- II. Sostenuto
- III. Vivo
- IV. Mesto

Roger Admiral, piano

Three Little Pieces for Cello and Piano, Op. 11 (1914)

Anton von Webern

- I. Mäßige
- II. Sehr bewegt
- III. Äußerst ruhig

Tanya Prochazka, cello

Roger Admiral, piano

Rodica lui Ionescu - Marta lui Kurtág (for pianino)

György Kurtág

Roger Admiral, piano

Ligatura - Message to Frances-Marie

György Kurtág

(The answered unanswered question) Op. 31b (1989)

for Cello with Two Bows, Two Violins and Pianino

Tanya Prochazka, cello

Aaron Au and Elisabeth McHan, violins

Roger Admiral, piano

Program Notes

György Kurtág

b. Lugoj, Romania, 19 February, 1926

Tre pezzi Op. 14e for violin and piano (1979)

- I. Od und traurig (Bored and Sad)
- II. Vivo
- III. Aus der Ferne (From a Distance)

György Kurtág, born to Hungarian parents in Lugoj (now in Romania) is the only composer to have lived through Hungary's communist regime (1949-89) and still to have achieved international renown. He is linked to Hungary's most famous twentieth-century composer through his study with Sándor Veress, an exiled student of Béla Bartók's. Veress's main instructional themes were techniques of canon and questions of symmetry in form, and Kurtág's early music (1940-57) also reflects this heritage through folk-song influenced harmonies and rhythmic structures reminiscent of Bartók. Since 1985 Kurtág has experimented with larger ensembles, but his more recent works are pared down, gestural and basic, reflecting a reductive compositional progression that is mirrored in his ever-accumulating *Games* for solo piano (see below).

Kurtág's work has been intermittent at best, and he has dealt frequently with bouts of "writer's block" as well as a perfectionism that sees him submit pieces into the repertory and subsequently withdraw them for revision. Because of this, his compositions evolve, taking years to be completed. Written after he began writing his *Games* for solo piano, these pieces for violin and piano – like other pieces from this period (1973-1984) – are characterized by their wittiness and self-contained structures.

Anton von Webern

b. Vienna 3 December 1883

d. Mittersill, 15 September 1945

Four pieces for violin and piano, Op. 7

- I. Sehr langsam (very slowly)
- II. Rasch (fast)
- III. Sehr langsam
- IV. Bewegt (allegro)

Together with Arnold Schoenberg and his other famous student, Alban Berg, Anton Webern (probably Schoenberg's first pupil) formed what is now referred to as the Second Viennese School. Together they were pioneers in the exploration of free atonality – composition written without reference to a tonal centre – and, in the 1920's and thereafter, the twelve-tone technique of pitch organisation. Throughout his career, Webern's music was consistently the most concise of the three, often almost aphoristic, and all his music is marked by extreme care in details of musical expression.

Opus 7/1 was Webern's first publication. Although it was published in a periodical in 1912, Universal Edition did not accept it until 1914, which, unfortunately, was a bad time for music publishing, and everything else cultural in Europe. On June 28 of that

year Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated and Europe was catapulted into World War I. It was not until 1922 that Opus 7 was finally published. Although now nearly a century old, the atonal language and concentrated style of the pieces of Opus 7 still offer substantial analytical, theoretical and aesthetic challenges. Tempo groups the four movements into contrasting pairs, and they vary in the complexity of textural motion as well; for example, the first is the calm and transparent of the set, while the fourth is one of Webern's most agitated pieces of music.

György Kurtág

Op. 8, II (5, 7 and 9); III (1) for piano

Op. 3 (8 piano pieces, 1960)

1, 3, 6 & 7

Szálkák (Splinters) Op. 6/d (1978)

Kurtág spent the year 1957-8 in Paris attending classes taught by Messiaen, Milhaud and Max Deutsch, but felt that his consultations with Marianne Stein, an art psychologist, were his most important experiences that year. He composed only one piece in that period, and when he took it to Stein, she suggested that it might be more effective to develop his compositional voice through smaller, simpler musical tasks such as exploring the variety of connections that could be made between two notes. From these clearly defined tasks emerged his Opp.1 through 9; of these, sections of Opp.3, 6 and 8 are included in tonight's concert.

Heinz Holliger

b. Langenthal, canton of Berne, 21 May 1939

Lieder ohne Worte, (Songs Without Words) Volume II

- I. Fruhlingslied (in memoriam Sándor Veress, d. 4 March 1992)
(Spring Song)
- III. (... fern ...) (for Catrin) (...distant...)
- V. (Flammen ... Schnee) (for Catrin) (Flames...Snow)
- VI. (... sam) (for Catrin)
- VII. Berceuse matinale (in memoriam Gertrud Demenga 18 May 1918 – 13 June 1987)

Holliger has won composition prizes across Europe and has been a composer-in-residence with Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (1993–4) and at the Lucerne Festival in 1998. But his career in music has not centred solely around composition. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, after winning several competitions, he embarked on a solo career in oboe performance and composers such as Penderecki, Krenek, Lutoslawski, Stockhausen, Veress and Berio have written works for him. Since the mid-1970's Holliger has gained prominence as a conductor as well. Since 1965 he has been at the Staatliche Musikhochschule of Freiburg as an oboe instructor.

Influenced heavily by the Second Viennese School, Berg in particular, Holliger's work also gives a nod to his composition teacher in the 1950's, Sándor Veress, and, in turn, Bartók. Holliger's writing reflects the influence of Berg and Veress's contrapuntal techniques, which were tempered early in his career by the influence of Pierre Boulez,

who brought Holliger's attention to issues of harmony. Unlike volume one of his *Songs Without Words*, the pieces in volume two have titles and dedications that give clues to their hidden meanings. *Frühlingslied* is accompanied by a eulogy for Veress written by the violinist Catrin Demenga, for whom many of the songs are written. *Berceuse matinale*, a passacaglia divided into four-bar units in three-quarter time, recollects a Baroque lament, specifically Dido's final song "When I am laid in earth" from Purcells' *Dido and Aeneas*.

György Kurtág

Jelek, játékok és üzenetek (Signs, Games and Messages) for solo viola (1989-97)

Eine Blume fur Denes Zsigmondy

Perpetual Motion (a)

In memoriam Tamas Blum

Kurtág wrote "Eine Blume fur Denes Zsigmondy" recalling a scene late in Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Nostalghia*, where a man haunted by apocalyptic visions counsels the main character to save humanity by carrying a burning candle through an abandoned pool without letting the flame go out. The groans of the man whose candle continually goes out are heard in the slow quarter-tone vibrato of the viola, and, according to the composer, are what the piece is about. Every downbow attack is prepared "in the air" by the overlong upbow which precedes it. The piece ends with a requiem or chorale-like idea. The word Blume in the title refers to a recurring motif in Kurtág's music: "Virág az ember" (Flowers are we...), reflecting on the fragility of the human existence.

"In memoriam Tamas Blum" was written in memory of the conductor (1927-1992) and close friend of the composer. The autograph for the piece states that "Tamas Blum, too, is already waiting over there..." The opening, marked *sereno* and *semplice*, is a simple melody with an other-worldly quality. Insistent tone repetitions in both the accompaniment and the melody eventually suffuse the piece with the inevitability and inescapability of death. A fortissimo outcry is answered by a chorale-like phrase on open strings. A lyrical Arioso takes the sorrow further – past the "objective" chorale to a more personal farewell.

Anton von Webern

Variations for piano, Op. 27

- I. Sehr mässig (andante)
- II. Sehr schnell (very quickly)
- III. Ruhig fliessend (quietly flowing)

During the second quarter of the 20th century, these composers were the most major influences of the twelve-tone technique of composition. Webern's approach to twelve-tone composition, as exemplified in the Variations for piano, is as distinctive as his free atonal works. While Schoenberg took many liberties with the technique, and Berg combined it with other compositional approaches, Webern was strict in his use of serialism and his canonic structures are both highly complex and extraordinarily clear. His innovative approach greatly influenced later composers, such as Boulez and Stockhausen.

Published early in May 1937, these pieces were first performed in Vienna by Peter Stadlen on October 26, with a repeat performance for the Verein für neue Musik on October 30 of that same year. A reviewer for the *Neue Freie Presse* commented on the set on November 6: "Here the musical solution to the much contested problem of smashing the atom has succeeded." In both Opus 24 and this set, symmetry is the focus of the compositional method. That symmetry, however, is not built into the tone row that the piece is based on; rather, a combination of retrogrades and inversions of the row result in palindromic and mirror effects.

György Kurtág

Játékok (Games) Volume II for solo piano (1975-9)

Dirge

Antiphone in f-sharp

Hommage a Christian Wolff (Half-asleep)

Andras Hajdu is 60

Hommage a Pierre Boulez

Rodica lui Ionescu - Marta lui Kurtág

In 1973 Kurtág was asked to contribute pieces to a piano album for children. This, along with his involvement with the New Music Studio, an experimental group of composers and other music professionals formed in 1970 in Budapest, shifted him out of another compositional impasse. The clearly defined project set before him resulted in *Játékok* (*Games*) and became the backdrop of all his further compositional activity. Intended to liberate the child pianist, they in fact liberated the composer as well. The graphic notation of the pieces is intended to stimulate the performer to play with sound and sensation rather than demand tradition intellectual analysis and to bring the element of spontaneity that was once found in folk-songs and Gregorian chant back to music. *Games* was also a way for Kurtág to filter in other composers' ideas, albeit not always in flattering ways. But *Games* also became a sort of musical diary, one in which Kurtág could work through events in his life, and as such many of the pieces and their titles reflect the deaths of friends and colleagues.

In *Antiphone in f-sharp*, the central note of f-sharp is played increasingly emphatically after each quiet 'question' from the counter voice. The counter voice eventually finds a home in the harmony of the third, a-sharp. The two worlds of the white keys and the black keys, each played by a different hand, are united in *Hommage a Christian Wolff*. The piece resolves into a tetrad that combines the major and minor triads. The title refers to the use of an improvisation concept borrowed from Christian Wolff's *Burdocks*. Kurtág honours the birthday of a friend in *Andras Hadju is 60*, and *Rodica lui Ionescu* is dedicated to his wife, Marta.

Anton von Webern

Three Pieces for cello and piano, Op. 11

- I. Mäßige (andante)
- II. Sehr bewegt (very fast)
- III. Äußerst ruhig (extremely quiet)

Writing to Schoenberg on July 17, 1914, Webern wrote the following explanation of why he had not produced the longer work his mentor had suggested of him, “I had a clear conception of a larger, two-movement composition for Cello and Piano and started the work right away. However, as I completed a good piece of the first movement it became convincingly clearer that I must write something else... So I broke off, even though the larger work was going well, and quickly wrote these little pieces... This is the way in which these three creatures originated. And seldom have I so strongly had the feeling that something good has taken place.” The first movement is only eight bars long while the second is uncharacteristically loud and frenetic. The third movement features a very restricted range for the piano, a combination of rhythmic patterns and tempo that remove any feeling of pulse in the piece, and eight notes for the cello played entirely *pp* or *ppp*. This set is considered to be the most extreme form of Webern’s aphoristic style – composed in brief, unconnected “sentences.” The work is a smorgasbord of expressive and virtuosic effects for the cello, and the sequence of the movements is again based on contrasts.

György Kurtág

Ligatura - Message to Frances-Marie (The answered unanswered question) Op.31b

The alternate title to this piece was *Der verliebte Dinosaurier* (The Dinosaur in Love). Composed in 1989 for the cellist Frances-Marie Uitti, the official title as well as the instrumentation alludes to the cellist’s compatriot, American composer Charles Ives (1874-1954) and his piece *The Unanswered Question* (1906). In Ives’ piece, a trumpet reiterates a “question” seven times against an unchanging background of strings. *Ligatura* is for cello with two bows used simultaneously, two violins placed as far from the cello as possible, and a piano (far from center but nearer to violins than to the cello), which does not enter until the second last measure.

Notes by Allison Fairbairn

Roger Admiral completed a Doctor of Music degree at the University of Alberta. His main teachers include Helmut Brauss, Peter Smith and Virginia Blaha. With help from the Johann Strauss Foundation, Roger also studied Lied-duo at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Recent performances include a recital with baritone Nathan Berg on the Great Performers series at Lincoln Center, New York City (United States of America) and with mezzo-soprano Marie-Nicole Lemieux at the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra's Symphony Under the Sky. Currently Roger works in Edmonton and performs as part of the Kovalis Duo with Montreal percussionist Philip Hornsey.

A native of Lethbridge, Alberta, **Aaron Au** is currently a first violinist with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra as well as Visiting Assistant Professor of Viola, Violin and Chamber Music at the University of Alberta where he is also a *Winspear Fellow*.

A student of Andrew Dawes and Gerald Stanick at the University of British Columbia where he studied both violin and viola, Aaron graduated Head of the Class in 1998. He was then awarded the *Johann Strauss Foundation Scholarship for the Advanced Study of Music in Austria* and pursued a year of studies at the Universitaet Mozarteum in Salzburg Austria with Thomas Riebl and Claudia Bussian.

A frequent guest of CBC Radio, Aaron has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician on both violin and viola in concerts across Canada, the U.S. and Europe. He has also won various competitions including the 1993 CIBC National Music Festival where he was violist of the Bridge Trio. A member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Aaron served as concertmaster for the orchestra's tour of Canada and Japan. He also performed with the Vancouver Symphony and Opera Orchestras as both violinist and violist. In the summer of 2001, Aaron participated as a faculty member at the Agassiz Music Festival in Winnipeg, performing chamber music as both violinist and violist as well as coaching several talented young musicians. Aaron recently completed an extremely successful tour of Cuba as principal violist of the University of Alberta Academy Strings Orchestra.

Aaron is currently working on his Doctor of Music degree at the University of Alberta where he has been awarded the *University of Alberta PhD Scholarship*. Under the guidance of Guillaume Tardif and and Tanya Prochazka, he is pursuing studies in string performance and pedagogy.

Elisabeth McHan is a fourth year BMus student at the University of Alberta Department of Music. Currently she studies viola with Aaron Au and violin with Guillaume Tardif. She is also a member of the Department of Music string quartet. Recently she received a Arts Undergraduate Student Researcher Award, enabling her to research twentieth century violin and cello duo repertoire with Tanya Prochazka.

Tanya Prochazka is professor of cello and chamber music and conductor of the Academy Strings and the University Symphony Orchestra at the University of Alberta. Originally from Australia, Tanya studied with Andre Navarra and Jean Hubert at the Paris Conservatoire and at Indiana University with Janos Starker. Ms. Prochazka is an international soloist, recitalist and chamber musician. In her past musical lives she was the cellist of Ensemble I in Vienna, Austria and principal cellist of the Scottish Baroque Ensemble, the London Mozart Players and the English Sinfonia in Britain. Tanya also taught at the Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School in London, England, the Victorian College of the Arts and the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne, Australia. Tanya gives regular cello and chamber music masterclasses and orchestra clinics. She has an impressive discography featuring French, American, English and Czech music. Her newly released world premier recording of the New Goldberg Variations with pianist Jacques Després has been reviewed with great acclaim in the Strad Magazine, the National Post and other journals, and is played regularly on CBC and National Public Radio in the US. At the beginning of March 2004 she performed the world premier of the cello concerto by Alfred Fisher, "La Rosa Enflorece", with the Kingston Symphony Orchestra, in Kingston, Ontario.

Upcoming Events

October

16 Saturday, 8:00 pm

The University of Alberta

Symphonic Wind Ensemble

William H Street, Director

Chance Variations on a Korean Folk Song

Persichetti Masquerade

Walton Crown Imperial

Matheson Burns; Reynolds Scenes

Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

18 Monday, 8:00 pm

The University of Alberta and the

Grant MacEwan College Jazz Bands

Tom Dust and Raymond Baril,

Directors

An Evening of Big Band Jazz

Featuring works by Hoagy Carmichael, Doug Beach, Lennie Niehaus, Chuck Sayre, Duke Ellington, Rich Matteson, Tom Dust, Gordon Goodwin, Matt Harris, Thad Jones, Sammy Nestico, Bob Mintzer, Bobby Troup, Joe d'Etienne

Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

23 Saturday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Piano Masterclass

Lana Henschell, Eckhardt-Gramatté

Piano Competition Winner

Free admission

24 Sunday, 8:00 pm

Visiting Artist Recital

Lana Henschell, Eckhardt-Gramatté

Piano Competition Winner

JS Bach *Fantasie and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 944*; Beethoven *Sonata in A Major, Op 2, No 2*; McIntyre *Butterflies and Bobcats* (2004 Commissioned work) 2004 E-gré Competition); Scriabin Sonata No 5, Op 53; Béla Bartók *Mikrokosmos, Nos 142 and 143; Sonate*

Admission: \$15/student/senior, \$20/adult

28 & 29 Thursday & Friday, 8:00 pm

The University Symphony Orchestra

with the University of Alberta

Concert Choir and Madrigal Singers

Tanya Prochazka, Leonard Ratzlaff

and **Michael Massey, Conductors**

Dvořák *Domov muj (My Home) Overture, Op 62* ; Te Deum, Op 103;

Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op 104

Soloist Tanya Prochazka, cello

Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

November

1 Monday, 12:00 noon

Music at Noon, Convocation Hall

Student Recital Series

Featuring students from the Department of Music. Free admission

Please donate to Campus Food Bank

Unless otherwise indicated

Convocation Hall, Arts Building, University of Alberta

Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice. Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).

